

News from Ed Markey

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Massachusetts Seventh District

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REP. MARKEY CONCERNED THAT POLITICS TRUMPS SCIENCE AT THE FDA

***Assistant Commissioner for Women's Health Resigns, Points To Foot-dragging
on Emergency Contraception Decision***

Washington, D.C. – Responding to the news that Susan Wood, Assistant Commissioner for Women's Health and Director of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Office of Women's Health, resigned today in protest over how the FDA has handled the Plan B Emergency Contraception Over-the-Counter Application Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior Member of the Energy and Commerce Committee made the following statement:

"I am disappointed that the FDA has allowed an extreme political ideology to hijack our nation's women's health policy. The resignation of biologist and Assistant Commissioner Susan Wood is another sign that this Administration would rather manipulate science to fit their agenda than work with medical experts to serve the interest of the American people," said Rep. Markey. "Dr. Crawford promised he would make a decision on Plan B by September 1, 2005 during his Senate confirmation hearings. He is leaving women across the country waiting with his political foot-dragging."

In an email detailing her reasons for resigning Wood said, "I have spent the last 15 years working to ensure that science informs good health-policy decisions," Wood, director of FDA's Office of Women's Health, "I can no longer serve as staff when scientific and clinical evidence, fully evaluated and recommended by the professional staff here, has been overruled."

Wood's resignation follows the latest in a series of delays by the FDA that have prevented Plan-B, an emergency contraception pill, from being sold over-the-counter in pharmacies. FDA Commissioner Lester Crawford announced Friday that the FDA would postpone a ruling on the over-the-counter sales of Plan B to women, in order to open the question to public comment for 60 days due to concerns that younger teens could access the drug and use it properly.

Dr. Crawford broke a promise he made during his Senate confirmation hearings to make a decision on Plan B by September 1, 2005. Dr. Crawford had several holds on his confirmation for his failure to make a decision on the application.

For more information on Rep. Markey's work on FDA reform, please go to
<http://www.house.gov/markey/healthgen.htm>.